

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SES-02 SAA-01
SSM-03 HA-05 IO-13 SCS-06 CA-01 MCT-02 OPR-02
ACDA-12 /107 W

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O P 301444Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9466
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 5045

E.9. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION, AUGUST 30, 1978, 1600 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 5024 (DTG 9 0 291419Z AUG 78)

1. SECURITY SITUATION.

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A. FIGHTING BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND SYRIANS IN AYN AR-
RUMMANEH AREA, WHICH BEGAN AT ABOUT 1430 HOURS AUGUST 29
STOPPED AGAIN AT ABOUT 0530 HOURS. NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY
(NLP) OFFICIALS TOLD THE PRESS THAT NLP FIGHTERS IN AYN
AR-RUMMANEH HAD BEEN ORDERED TO HOLD THEIR FIRE "TO AVOID
ESCALATION IN THE FIGHTING."

B. IN WEST BEIRUT THE LEFTIST MILITIAS OF THE PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY AND AL-MURABITUN EXCHANGED SMALL ARMS FIRE IN THE MUSAYTBAH AND ZARIF NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE LATE AFTERNOON ON AUGUST 29. THIS FIRING, WHICH THE PRESS REPORTED AS THE RESULT OF A "PERSONAL FIGHT," ENDED WHEN THE LEADERSHIPS OF THE TWO GROUPS MET AND AGREED TO "ELIMINATE THE CAUSES OF FRICTION."

C. THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE (ADF) COMMAND ANNOUNCED THAT AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF ADF TROOPS WOULD BE TRIED FOR "CRIMES COMMITTED IN THE CEDARS REGION" ON AUGUST 28. THIS IS AN ADF EFFORT TO DEAL WITH THE KILLING OF SIX PERSONS DURING THE ADF SWEEP OF THE ROAD BETWEEN BSHARRI AND THE BIQA ON THE 28TH. ONE OF THOSE KILLED WAS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.

D. IN BYBLOS, THE PRESS REPORTED, A MEMBER OF THEN MU-AWWAD FAMILY OF ZGHARTA (WHICH IS CURRENTLY WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE FRANJIYAHS) FIRED ON A PHALANGIST PARTY MEMBER, BUT MISSED. THE ZGHARTAWI WAS THEN CAPTURED BY PHALANGIST MILITIAMEN. (COMMENT: THIS COULD SET THE STAGE FOR A NEW SYRIAN MOVE AGAINST THE PHALANGE IN THE BYBLOS AREA. LAST WEEKEND'S FIGHTING IN BATRUN FOLLOWED A SIMILAR CHAIN OF EVENTS, I.E., A FRANJIYAH ATTACK ON PHALANGISTS, A PHALANGE REACTION AND A SYRIAN MOVE TO "RESTORE ORDER." END COMMENT.)
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E. LEBANESE ARMY SOLDIERS AND RIGHTIST MILITIAMEN CLASHED BRIEFLY ON AUGUST 29 JUST EAST OF THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT AT THE MUSEUM CROSSING POINT. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE ALTERCATION BEGAN WHEN RIGHTIST MILITIAMEN MANNING A CHECKPOINT KIDNAPPED A LEBANESE SOLDIER DRIVING THROUGH. ARMY SOLDIERS THEN ARRESTED A NUMBER OF MILITIAMEN. (PRESS REPORTS VARY ON THE NUMBER ARRESTED, CITING EITHER 9 OR 15.) LEBANESE ARMY TROOPS NEAR THE PALACE OF JUSTICE WERE THEN ATTACKED BY RIGHTIST MILITIAMEN. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT THE NLP MILITIA KIDNAPPED THREE LEBANESE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE EMPLOYEES IN THE BEIRUT RIVER AREA. THE DEFENSE MINISTER MET WITH NLP LEADERS AND APPARENTLY ARRANGED THE RELEASE OF THE KIDNAP VICTIMS. THE PRESS REPORTED THAT THE "INCIDENTS WERE COMPLETELY CONTAINED AROUND 1500 HOURS."

F. A LOCAL LEFTIST LEADER TOLD US SIX CHRISTIANS HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED RECENTLY IN EAST BEIRUT. ONE AMERICAN CITIZEN IS STILL MISSING AFTER APPARENTLY HAVING DISAPPEARED IN THE ALAYH AREA ON AUGUST 28. WE HAVE A REPORT OF THE KIDNAP-MURDER OF ONE UNITED NATIONS DRIVER,

A CHRISTIAN LEBANESE WHOSE SISTER WAS THE SERVANT OF AN
EMBASSY OFFICER.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 5045

2. SOUTH LEBANON.

THE PRESS REPORTED THAT TROOPS OF THE FIJI
CONTINGENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN
LEBANON (UNIFIL) WERE FIRED UPON, LATE AUGUST 28, BY
UNIDENTIFIED GUNMEN. THE PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST CONTROLLED
TOWN OF NABATIYAH WAS ALSO SHELLLED, EARLY AUGUST 29,
ACCORDING TO THE PRESS.

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3. POLITICAL STATEMENTS.

A. PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL EMERGED FROM A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS AND SAID THAT HE SEES "NO SOLUTION TO THE LEBANESE PROBLEM, UNLESS GOD SENDS ONE." GEMAYEL SAID THAT HE HAD CHALLENGED SARKIS TO DECLARE WHETHER OR NOT THE PHALANGE IS AN OPPONENT OF THE LEGITIMATE AUTHORITIES. HE LATER RESPONDED TO A QUESTION ON WHETHER OR NOT THE LEGITIMATE AUTHORITIES HAD A PLAN OF ACTION BY ASKING, "ARE THERE ANY LEGITIMATE AUTHORITIES?"

B. WALID JUMBLATT, THE DRUZE LEADER OF THE LEFTIST PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP), TRAVELLED TO NORTH LEBANON FOR A MEETING ON AUGUST 30 WITH FORMER PRESIDENT SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER RASHID KARAMI. JUMBLATT TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE MEETING IS TO BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD THE FORMATION OF A NEW NATIONAL ALLIANCE "TO CONFRONT THE ZIONIST-ISOLATIONIST THREAT." JUMBLATT SAID THAT HIS MEETING WITH FRANJIYAH AND OTHER CHRISTIAN LEADERS WAS "AN ELOQUENT ANSWER TO ISRAEL'S CLAIM TO BE THE PROTECTOR OF LEBANON'S CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES." (COMMENT: JUMBLATT HAS BEEN INVOLVED FOR MONTHS IN ATTEMPTS TO FORM SOME SORT OF ALLIANCE WITH THE SYRIANS AND GROUPS FRIENDLY TO THEM. THE CHANCES OF REAL SUCCESS STILL APPEAR DIM. END COMMENT.)

C. THE GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE, SUNNI MUSLIM, "ISLAMIC GROUPING" DENOUNCED FORMER PRESIDENT CAMILLE CHAMOUN, WITHOUT NAMING HIM SPECIFICALLY, FOR CHAMOUN'S ALLEGED VISIT TO ISRAEL. THE GROUPING CALLED THE VISIT A "CRIME OF THE UTMOST SERIOUSNESS AGAINST THE NATION."

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D. AN NLP OFFICIAL TOLD THE PRESS THAT LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS WAS TOLD OF "SYRIAN CONDITIONS" FOR ALLOWING PHALANGE AND NLP TO BE PART OF "NATIONAL UNITY" GOVERNMENT. THE NLP OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE SYRIANS HAD AGREED TO SUCH A GOVERNMENT ON THE CONDITION THAT THE RIGHTIST LEADERS: (1) ANNOUNCED ACCEPTANCE OF THE "PRINCIPLE OF LEBANON'S ARAB IDENTITY"; (2) HELP THE LEBANESE STATE ESTABLISH ITS AUTHORITY IN ALL PARTS OF LEBANON, INCLUDING THE SOUTH; (3) SEVER ALL LINKS WITH ISRAEL AND DECLARE IT AN ENEMY STATE; AND, (4) FACILITATE THE REBUILDING OF THE ARMY ON A "MORE BALANCED FOUNDATION." THE NLP OFFICIAL SAID THAT BOUTROS HAD TRIED TO DISCUSS

THE SECURITY SITUATION, BUT THAT THE SYRIAN LEADERS
REPLIED THAT THIS WAS A MILITARY MATTER WHICH LEBANESE
AUTHORITIES SHOULD WORK OUT WITH THE SYRIAN ARMY COMMAND.
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